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Sense of coherence and resilience for coping with stress in the group of juveniles referred to probation centres by family courts***

Summary

The aim of this study was to analyse the relationship between the sense of coherence and resilience and the styles of stress coping and to determine which of the studied variables (comprehensibility; manageability; meaningfulness; optimistic attitude and energy; perseverance and determination in action; sense of humour and openness to new experiences; personal competences and tolerance of negative affect) was more important in predicting coping styles with stressful situations in the group of juveniles who had been referred to probation centres. Participants in this study were 210 juveniles from probation centres. The following research tools were used in the research: A. Antonovsky's Orientation to Life Questionnaire, Resilience Scale by N. Ogińska-Bulik and Z. Juczyński, and Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations by N. S. Endler and J. D. A. Parker. The research results show that sense of coherence and resilience play a predictive function for the style which focuses on the task, emotions, avoidance and strategy related to engaging in substitute activities and seeking contact with people. Building (by probation officers) the sense of coherence and resilience among juveniles

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involves better understanding of the surrounding world and the stimuli which come from it, understanding internal signals and increasing the sense of manageability and comprehensibility, enhancing the ability to use the own and the environmental resources as well as working on the sense of meaningfulness, i.e. the motivational aspect of functioning. Supporting components of resilience (optimistic attitude and energy; perseverance and determination in action; sense of humour and openness to new experiences; personal competences and tolerance of negative affect) through psychoeducational activities (in probation centres) enables better understanding of the own self and, consequently, using stress management strategies aimed at finding a positive solution to a particular situation.

Key words: coherence; resilience; juveniles; probation centres; coping

red. Paulina Marchlik

Social rehabilitation pedagogy in the 20th century focused primarily on the diagnosis of disorders in the development of juveniles and the search for corrective methods aimed at buffering risk factors. The current state of risky and criminal behaviour among minors inclines both theoreticians and practitioners to reflect on the sense of previous interventions in the field of prevention and resocialisation as ineffective and incompatible in new socio-economic and cultural conditions (Michel, 2014). In view of these challenges, attempts are being made to update the current thinking about resocialisation and to create innovative preventive interventions based on the resilience theory. In the article, the attention will be drawn to the function of the sense of coherence and resilience, which contribute to the activation of appropriate trends in various stressful situations in the group of juveniles referred by family courts to probation centres. The first construct that helps to effectively deals with the problems and challenges of personal and social life is psychological resilience, which is defined either as an individual feature of a person characterising their personality (Block & Block, 1980; Block & Kremen, 1996; Kaczmarek, 2011; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2011; Wagnild & Young, 1993). Resilience as a personal feature is a personality trait that alleviates the negative effects of stress and enhances a person's positive adaptation. This is important when coping both with traumatic events and with the stress of everyday life (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Sood, Bakhshi, & Devi, 2013; Wood & Bhatnagar, 2015). People with high level of resilience can, in a sense, be defined as "indestructible", since – despite psychological adversities and a difficult environmental situation, they can live constructively, deal with stressful situations and perform life tasks in a competent manner (Garmezy, 1974, 1993). The second fundamental construct comprised in this study

which helps to manage stressful situations is the general sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1995, 1996). This construct derives from the health-preservation approach developed by A. Antonovsky (1995). The sense of coherence is a global orientation of the human being, expressing the degree to which particular individuals have a strong and lasting dynamic sense of confidence that the stimuli they receive in a lifetime are structured, predictable, and explainable. There are available resources that will enable them to meet the demands imposed by these stimuli. These requirements are a challenge worth pursuing (Antonovsky, 1993, 1995). Three main components of the sense of coherence can be distinguished: comprehensibility, meaningfulness and manageability. People with a high sense of coherence have the ability to correctly and accurately assess the surrounding world. Such people respond to stressors actively and with a belief that their resources are valuable, effective and will help to overcome the difficulties posed by this situation. Thanks to that, their emotions are not extreme and they manage to control them, because the tension does not automatically transform into distress and does not block the mechanism of coping with difficult situations. For this reason, the use of irrational defensive mechanisms is rarely observed, some attempts to sensibly focus on the task take place instead (Antonovsky, 1993, 1995, 1996).

The issues are viewed in terms of stress management strategies of Endler and Parker (1990b, 1990a, 1994), who have operationalised the process of coping with stress and distinguished three basic styles of stress management (style – a constant tendency to use a type of behaviour typical of an individual in a variety of stressful situations): (1) focus on the problem, (2) focus on emotions, and (3) avoidance. The style focused on avoidance can be manifested in two forms, (4) engaging in substitute activities, or (5) seeking contact with people (Endler & Parker, 1990b, 1990a; Jachnis, 2000). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) point to the fact that styles of coping with stress can influence how a stressful event is perceived and how it can be managed. They describe coping as every effort and activity aimed at fighting the threat. The need to explore and understand the processes of coping with stress and the factors conditioning the effectiveness of these processes seems particularly important for the research. This fact has been emphasised by various researchers (Adwin & Revenson, 1987; Cox & Ferguson, 1991; Dewe, Cox, & Ferguson, 1993; Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Leipold & Greve, 2009; Wood & Bhatnagar, 2015).

There are many different factors that affect the ability to cope with stressful situations. Determining the factors in this field is one of the main motives

of research exploration, which in the future may enable the development of effective ways to help juveniles through practical application of the obtained test results in early intervention and preventive actions (Le Cornu, 2009; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008, 2011; Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2015; Skehill, 2001). It is worth noting that the resilience and sense of coherence have so far been studied most often among the population of adults or adolescents with no problems with adhering to moral and legal norms (Ogińska-Bulik & Zadworna-Cieślak, 2015; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Wagnild, 2003). However, the analysis of this construct in the group of juveniles is a potential field for further research exploration. In view of the above, it should be noted that there are very few research reports describing these variables among juveniles who are subjects of appropriate educational measures applied by family courts. Considering the phenomenon of social maladjustment, the research included juveniles sent to probation centres.

A diagnosis of immunity factors and forces of the minors requires focusing on their strengths, which will lead them to more prosocial results (positive psychosocial functioning). In order for remedial actions to be effective, the concepts of resilience point out that the functioning of individuals should be analysed not only in the context of factors leading to maladjustment, but primarily from the perspective of their strengths and the resources they have. Paradoxically, we know less about the factors that can help such people than about those that lead to maladjustment. Researchers who undertake research related to youth manifesting symptoms of demoralisation and committing criminal offenses focused primarily on the reasons for the maladaptation of young people or the importance of various problems in their lives. They investigate individual and environmental links with juvenile delinquency by focusing on risk factors. The widely studied risk factors leading to juvenile offenses include, but are not limited to, age (Alltucker, Bullis, Close, & Yovanoff, 2006); deficits in neurological functioning (Steinberg & Scott, 2003); low IQ (Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985); lack of future orientation, impulsiveness (Steinberg & Scott, 2003); soulless and emotionless (Kruh, Frick, & Clements, 2005); personality (Kruh et al., 2005), emotional and avoidance styles of coping (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000); strict parenting practices (Kerr, Lopez, Olson, & Sameroff, 2004), poor anger management, interpersonal and decision-making skills (Calhoun, Glaser, & Bartolomucci, 2001); affiliation with criminal peers (Konaszewski & Kwadrans, 2017); and violence in the community (Guttman, Mowder, & Yasik, 2006). A limited number of studies, however, concerns

resilience and coherence, which can be classified as resources – factors enhancing the ability of juveniles to cope with stress. Based on previous findings in various groups of youth (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Konaszewski, Kolemba, & Niesiołbędzka, 2019; Konaszewski, Danilewicz, & Sosnowski, 2017) the hypotheses were put forward that resilience and a sense of coherence will positively combine with a style of counselling focused on task, negatively with an emotion-focused style, and that there will be no relationship between the resilience and avoidance style.

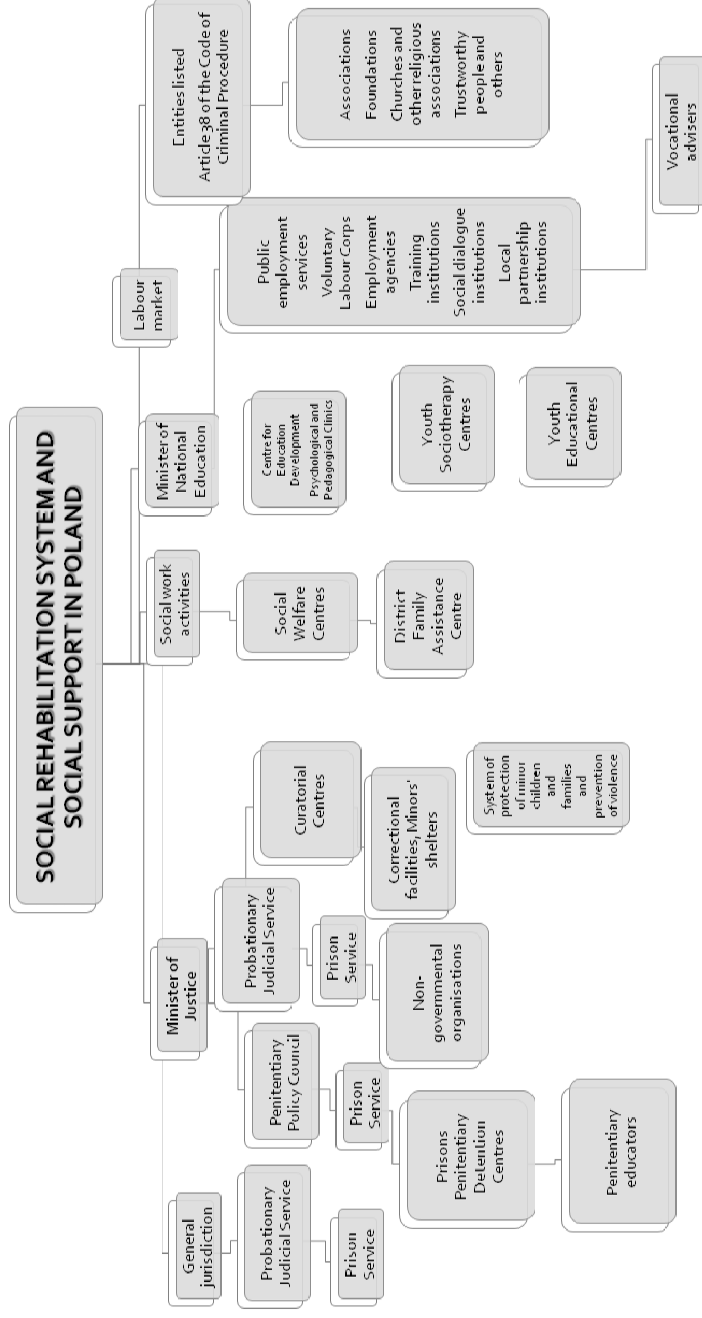
Functioning of juveniles in probation centres

Juvenile Justice emerged in the early 20th century because of the evidence that juveniles are in a difficult situation of transition which could be better overcome by educational support instead of punishment. That juvenile delinquency and crime is of an episodic nature which regularly disappears upon integration into family and professional life in early adulthood. Basic principles therefore are: minimum intervention (priority to diversion), education instead of punishment, restorative justice (conflicts between victim, offender and society can be solved outside the justice system) and punishment, particularly deprivation of liberty, as a last resort. Frieder Düinkel (2010) prepared typologies of juvenile justice systems: Welfare model; Justice model; Restorative justice (mediation, family conferencing etc.); Combinations of welfare and justice including minimum intervention and elements of restorative justice; “Neo-correctionalist” orientations. Nowhere has one single model prevailed on its own. Even in welfare models human rights and legal guarantees have been or are to be implemented. (Düinkel, 2010; Wójcik, Buczkowski, Czabański, & Jankowski 2008, Buczkowski, 2018).

The binding provisions of the Act on juvenile delinquency proceedings in Poland use the terms “punishable act” and “demoralisation”; however, the commonly used term is “juvenile delinquency”. Juvenile delinquency requires an appropriate, formalised reaction from the courts as well as the authorities that execute court rulings. In Poland, the general division of all educational measures provided for in the provisions of the act on juvenile delinquency proceedings is related to two basic categories of educational measures: the first are those that are not related to the change of the juvenile’s educational environment, but are based on an increased educational influence (e.g.

a probation centre); the second are the means which change the educational environment, cause the detachment from the previous family, school, peer and local environment, and place an individual in the appropriate educational institution (e.g. a youth educational centre). A specific type of measure called “the correctional one” is the placement of a juvenile in a correctional facility (an isolation centre, commonly referred to as a juvenile penal institution) (Gaberle, 2002; Górecki & Stachowiak, 2007; Kobes, 2011; Korcyl-Wolska, 2008).

The directive of the Minister of Justice of October 5, 2001 on probation centres specifies the procedure and detailed rules for the establishment and elimination of probation centres, the scope of activities and organisation of probation centres and the method of executing supervision over probation centres (Górecki & Stachowiak, 2007). Probation centres operate at district courts in a scope which depends on local needs, taking into account, in particular, the number of juvenile cases and the degree of their demoralisation. More than one centre can operate at a district court. The centre is open throughout the entire calendar year, on the days and in time adapted to the actual needs of the participants, no less than twenty hours per week, i.e., 4–5 hours per day. Admission of a given participant to the centre takes place on the basis of a court decision. The centre provides preventive activities as well as care, educational, and rehabilitation-therapeutic activities, aimed at changing the attitudes of participants towards a socially desirable direction and ensuring the proper development of their personality. In order to carry out these tasks, the centre organises classes with juveniles and initiates cooperation with state and social institutions, local government units, in particular with the family assistance centre of the county (§ 5 p. 2 of the Regulation of the Minister of Justice on probation centres), and with trustworthy individuals. Classes with juveniles rely in particular on: 1) organising free time, 2) establishing cooperation with the environment, 3) conducting therapy sessions, 4) providing help in removing educational and care negligence. According to the statistical data, the courts, when deciding on the application of a given educational measure, rarely refer juveniles to probation centres. Currently (part I of 2019) there are 1,481 juveniles in probation centres, in 2018 – 1,424, 2017 – 1,485, 2016 – 1,430 and in 2015 – 1,491. These figures show a fairly stable tendency in the court ruling regarding the use of this particular educational measure (Górecki & Stachowiak, 2007; Jedynak & Stasiak, 2014; Kobes, 2011; Kwadrans, 2013).



Scheme 1. Social rehabilitation system and social support in Poland

Source: Own elaboration

The reasons for the decision of an educational measure for a group of curatorial centres' participants and the characteristics included a number of reasons. The most common reasons for a probation decision in 2011 and 2018 are: school absenteeism, brawls, beatings, consumption of alcohol or psychoactive substances, escape from the family home, other, such as: preventive measure for minors at risk of demoralisation, cigarette smoking, theft, criminal acts, sexual activities, property damage, fraud, aggressive behaviour, misappropriation, extortion, burglary, vulgar and arrogant behaviour at school, possession of drugs, criminal threats, postponement of placement in a youth education centre (Kwadrans, 2012; Konaszewski & Kwadrans, 2016; Kwadrans, 2018; Konaszewski & Kwadrans, 2018).

Method

General aim of the study

1. The aim of this study was to analyse which of the studied variables (sense of coherence, resilience) was more important in predicting styles of coping in stressful situations in the group of juveniles who had been referred to probation centres. It was assumed that the sense of coherence and psychological resilience are factors determining the ways of coping with stress (Antonovsky, 1993, 1995, 1996; Cicchetti, 2010; Leipold & Greve, 2009; Wood & Bhatnagar, 2015).
2. Differences were also expected due to the tendency to apply appropriate styles of coping in stressful situations, due to resilience and the sense of coherence of juveniles from probation centres and other adolescents (the comparison group). It was assumed that young people with no behaviour problems will be characterised by the tendency to use the task-based style, while juveniles from probation centres will more often use the emotional and avoidant style. The level of resources (of resilience and sense of coherence) will also be lower in the group of juveniles than in the comparison group (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Sood et al., 2013; Votta & Manion, 2004).

Research sample

Juveniles

In total, 210 juveniles from probation centres by family courts were surveyed. The study included juveniles referred to probation centres all over Poland. The majority of the respondents were boys, 71.9% ($N = 151$), which stems from more frequent use of this educational resource (referring to the probation centre) in the case of juvenile boys than juvenile girls. Girls constituted 28.1% ($N = 59$) of the respondents. The data obtained during the research indicate that the age of the subjects was within the range of 13–17 ($M = 15.12$; $SD = 1.45$). The largest group of respondents were people aged 16 (27.1%), 13 (22.9%) and 17 (21%). The least numerous groups were respondents aged 14 (10.5%) and 15 (18.6%).

The comparison group

The comparison group consisted of 400 adolescents of both sexes, aged 13–17 ($M = 14.22$, $SD = 0.86$). The participants were students of lower secondary schools of the Podlaskie Voivodeship. In comparison to boys (43.5%; $N = 276$), the majority of the respondents were girls (57%; $N = 228$). The largest group of respondents were people aged 14 (41.9%) and 15 (27.4%), followed by 13-year-olds (23%). The smallest groups were respondents aged 16 (3.6%) and 17 (4.1%).

Research tools

The following research tools were used in the research: A. Antonovsky's Orientation to Life Questionnaire, Resilience Scale by N. Ogińska-Bulik and Z. Juczyński, and Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations by N. S. Enlender and J. D. A. Parker.

1. Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS, Poland, adapted by: P. Szczepaniak, J. Strelau, K. Wrześniewski) includes 48 statements used to determine what coping strategies a person dealing with a stressful situation chooses. It allows for measuring three basic styles of managing stressful situation: 1) task-oriented coping (T) implies purposeful and decisive focus on solving the problem and trying to make changes in the situation perceived as stressful; 2) emotion-oriented coping (E) involves emotional responses – preoccupation with oneself, fantasising, self-

- blaming; 3) avoidance-oriented coping (A) assumes the occurrence of activity aimed at avoiding the problem, escaping from it without trying to solve it. It can take two forms i.e. this may be an attempt to detach oneself from stressful situation by 4) undertaking another type of activity (engaging in substitute activities) – distraction (D) or by 5) seeking contact with other people (SD). The examined person selects on a 5-point scale the frequency with which they act in a given way in difficult, stressful situations. Reliability: high internal consistency of individual scales (coefficients in the range of 0.78–0.90), and satisfactory stability (correlation coefficients between the two-fold studies at an interval of 2–3 weeks in the range of 0.73–0.80). The sample items: I do what I think is the best, I accuse myself of delaying, I am trying to fall asleep (Endler & Parker, 1990b; Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, & Szczepaniak, 2005).
2. Sense of Coherence (SOC) was tested using the Orientation to Life Questionnaire. It consists of 29 statements and three subscales, i.e. a sense of comprehensibility (COM), manageability (MAN) and meaningfulness (MEAN). 11 statements belong to the first scale, 10 to the second, and 8 to the third. The respondent provides answers using a 7-point Likert scale, where “1” means that given attitude occurs always, and “7” – never. A general score (SOC) can also be obtained, indicating the level of the sense of coherence of the tested person (the results can fall within the range of 29–203) (Antonovsky, 1995). The evaluation of the Polish version of the SOC-29 Questionnaire showed high reliability of this tool. Indicators of internal coherence, calculated using the half-fraction with the Spearman-Brown correction, were respectively: for the sense of coherence – 0.92, sense of comprehensibility – 0.78, sense of manageability – 0.72 and sense of meaningfulness – 0.68, while Cronbach’s alpha was 0.78. The sample items: When you talk to people, do you have a feeling that they do not understand you? Has it ever happened to you that the people you were counting on let you down? (Antonovsky, 1995; Koniarek, Dudek, & Makowska, 1993).
 3. Resilience (RES) was measured using the Polish Resilience Scale developed by N. Ogińska-Bulik and Z. Juczyński, which is intended for measuring resilience of children and adolescents. It is a tool of self-description and consists of 18 statements. It measures the overall level of pressure and the level of four factors: factor 1 – optimistic attitude and energy, factor 2 – perseverance and determination in action, factor 3 – sense of humour

and openness to new experiences, factor 4 – personal competences and tolerance of negative affect. The respondents should indicate on a five-point scale (0–4) to what extent they agree with a given statement (Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2011). The reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for the entire scale (individual subscales within 0.76–0.87), stability (the correlation coefficient between the twofold studies at an interval of 4 weeks was 0.78). The sample items: I consider myself a strong person, I am open to new experiences (Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2011).

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, Student's t-statistics, significance level and the effect of difference) in the group of juveniles and adolescents (the comparison group).

Table 1¹

Statistics on the distribution of results on the scale of styles for stress management, resilience, sense of coherence in the examined groups

	Juveniles (probation center)		Youth with no problems		CI	t	Df	d
	M	SD	M	SD				
T	55.33	10.43	55.85	9.29	–1.10, 2.14	0.63	608	X
E	50.61	10.29	48.43	10.12	–3.88, –0.47	–2.54*	608	0.21
A	56.20	9.53	53.95	9.89	–3.89, –0.61	–2.70**	608	0.23
D	26.42	5.54	25.97	5.85	–1.41, .51	–0.92	608	X
SD	18.92	4.55	17.84	3.98	–1.78, –0.38	–3.20**	608	0.25
SOC	120.45	19.25	121.58	16.01	–1.75, 4.01	0.77	608	X
COM	43.06	8.89	43.35	7.72	–1.07, 1.65	0.42	608	X
MAN	38.91	8.58	43.44	7.36	3.22, 5.83	6.80***	608	0.64
MEAN	34.61	7.27	34.78	6.24	–.98, 1.28	0.31	608	X
RES	47.21	12.73	50.26	11.10	1.08, 5.00	3.05**	608	0.25

¹ To determine the size of the effect, Cohen's d statistics were used, which were interpreted in the following way: values in the range of 0.2–0.5 as small differences, in the range 0.5–0.8 as average and above 0.8 as large differences.

Factor 1	13.06	3.80	13.73	3.58	0.05, 1.28	2.15*	608	0.18
Factor 2	13.21	3.99	14.13	3.50	0.30, 1.53	2.92**	608	0.24
Factor 3	11.14	3.09	11.80	2.91	0.16, 1.15	2.59*	608	0.21
Factor 4	10.02	3.17	10.59	2.94	0.06, 1.08	2.21*	608	0.19

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.0001$

T – stress coping style focused on a task; E – stress coping style focused on emotions; A – stress coping style focused on avoidance; D – distraction, engaging in substitute activities; SD – seeking contact with other people; SOC – sense of coherence; COM – comprehensibility, MAN – manageability; MEAN – meaningfulness; RES – resilience; Factor 1 – optimistic attitude and energy; Factor 2 – perseverance and determination in action; Factor 3 – sense of humor and openness to new experiences; Factor 4 – personal competences and tolerance of negative affect

Source: own research

The analysis of Student's t-test for independent trials showed that the group of juveniles differs significantly from the group of adolescents who have no problems with the law in applying the stress management style focused on emotions (E), the style focused on avoidance (A) as well as seeking contact with people (SD). The difference effect is small in the comparable groups of variables in the use of emotional style, avoidance and seeking contact with people. In addition, the analysis showed that in the group of juveniles the average sense of manageability (MAN) is significantly higher than in the group of adolescents. The difference effect can be described as average. The socially maladjusted youth differs significantly from the youth in the comparison group in the intensity of the general resilience (RES) level as well as of the four factors (1–4) – optimistic attitude and energy, perseverance and determination in action, sense of humour and openness to new experiences, personal competences and tolerance of negative affect. There are no statistically significant differences in the choice of the task style, involvement in substitute activities and in the general sense of coherence, comprehensibility and meaningfulness. The difference effect in regard to resilience and its factors can be described as weak.

The analysis of correlation was aimed at establishing connections between the sense of coherence and resilience and stress management styles in difficult situations in the group of juveniles. Table 2 presents the correlation in pairs between the general sense of coherence and its components, psychological resilience and its factors, and the styles of coping with stress.

Table 2²

Correlation indicators (Pearson's r) between the sense of coherence, resilience and styles of stress-coping in the group of juveniles ($N = 210$)

	T	E	A	D	SD
SOC – sense of coherence	0.29**	–0.27**	0.06	–0.07	0.19**
COM – comprehensibility	0.33**	–0.01	0.21**	0.08	0.26**
MAN – manageability	0.18**	–0.22**	0.01	–0.08	0.09
MEAN – meaningfulness	0.19**	–0.38**	–0.05	–0.15*	0.13
RES – resilience	0.58**	0.05	0.30**	0.17*	0.26**
Factor 1 – optimistic attitude and energy	0.55**	0.05	0.25**	0.14*	0.24**
Factor 2 – perseverance and determination in action	0.60**	0.06	0.24**	0.16*	0.19**
Factor 3 – sense of humor and openness to new experiences	0.42**	0.02	0.24**	0.11	0.24**
Factor 4 – personal competence and tolerance of negative affect	0.52**	0.09	0.33**	0.25**	0.22**

* Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 (two-sidedly); ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sidedly)

T – stress coping style focused on a task; E – stress coping style focused on emotions; A – stress coping style focused on avoidance; D – distraction, engaging in substitute activities; SD – seeking contact with other people

Source: own research

In the group of juveniles, the general sense of coherence (SOC) and the sense of comprehensibility (COM), manageability (MAN) and meaningfulness (MEAN) turned out to be significantly positively related to the task-oriented style (T). The obtained correlation coefficients also indicate a positive relationship between the task-oriented style of coping (T) with stress and resilience (RES) and its factors (1–4). In other words, along with the increasing indicator defining the stress management style as focused on the task, the general sense of coherence, its components, resilience and its factors increase as well. The emotion-focused style (E) was negatively associated with the general sense of coherence (SOC), sense of meaningfulness (MEAN) and sense of manageability (MAN). This means that along with the growth of the sense of coherence, the sense of meaningfulness and manageability, the rate

² As per Cohen (1992), the absolute value of a correlation is equivalent to its effect size, with those under 0.10 being trivial and those between 0.10 and 0.30 being small/weak.

of employing the emotional style decreases. The analysis of relations between variables shows that the avoidance-oriented style (A) was positively related to the sense of comprehensibility (COM) and to resilience (RES) and its factors (1–4). This means that with the increase of these variables, the indicator of the avoiding style increases. One form of avoiding style – engaging in alternative activities (A) was associated with a sense of meaningfulness (MEAN), general level of resilience (RES) and factors 1, 2 and 4. This means that as the indicator of one variable increases, the indicator of the second variable increases as well. There was a positive correlation between the general sense of coherence (SOC), comprehensibility (COM), the general level of resilience (RES) and its factors (1–4) and seeking contact with people (SD) as a stress management strategy. This means that as the factors of resilience, global sense of coherence and comprehensiveness increase, the tendency to avoid stressful situations by seeking contact with people also increases. To identify multicollinearity between variables the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used. Small VIF values, ranged from 1.610 to 3.018 did not indicate serious multicollinearity symptoms.

In the further part, it was investigated which of the analysed factors of resilience and sense of coherence perform a predictive function for management styles in stressful situations. The results of hierarchical regression analyses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Predictors of stress management styles in the group of juveniles (N = 210)

Variable	Predictors	R ²	B	Standard error	Beta	t	p
T	(Constant)	0.40	28.290	4.107		6.888	0.000
	optimistic attitude and energy		0.722	0.274	0.255	2.640	0.009
	perseverance and determination in action		0.775	0.236	0.297	3.288	0.001
E	(Constant)	0.14	67.165	4.282		15.687	0.000
	meaningfulness		–0.630	0.146	–0.444	–4.311	0.000
A	(Constant)	0.10	40.970	3.569		11.478	0.000
	personal competence and tolerance of negative affect		0.818	0.297	0.272	2.759	0.006

D	(Constant)	0.08	27.032	2.113		12.793	0.000
	meaningfulness		-0.162	0.054	-0.213	-2.987	0.003
	personal competence and tolerance of negative affect		0.561	0.281	0.322	1.997	0.047
SD	(Constant)	0.07	11.178	2.117		5.279	0.000
	comprehensibility		0.103	0.049	0.199	2.116	0.036

Beta – standardized regression coefficient; B – regression coefficient; B Error – standard error of the estimate; R^2 – multiple correlation coefficient; T – stress coping style focused on a task; E – stress coping style focused on emotions; A – stress coping style focused on avoidance; D – distraction, engaging in substitute activities; SD – seeking contact with other people

Source: own research

The variables which allow to predict the task style are optimistic attitude and energy (*Beta* = 0.25) and perseverance and determination in action (*Beta* = 0.29), which explains 40% of the variance in the results of the dependent variable. A positive regression coefficient of these variables indicates a positive effect on the explained variable. This means that with the increase of these factors, the tendency to use the task-oriented style increases as well. An important predictor of the emotional style turned out to be the sense of meaningfulness (*Beta* = -0.44), explaining 14% of the variance of the dependent variable results. The negative regression coefficient of these variables indicates its negative effect on the explained variable. This means that with the increase of the sense of meaningfulness, the tendency to choose the style focused on emotions decreases. The regression analysis showed the importance of personal competence and tolerance of negative affect (*Beta* = 0.27), which helps in choosing the avoidant style – this explains 10% of the variance of the dependent variable. The impact of this variable is positive, which means that as the factor 4 increases, the tendency to use the avoidant style also increases. The variables which allow for predicting the style associated with engaging in substitute activities turned out to be the sense of meaningfulness (*Beta* = -0.23) and personal competences and tolerance of negative affect (*Beta* = 0.32). The impact of the sense of meaningfulness is negative, while the factor 4 is positive. This means that as the factor 4 increases, the tendency to use this style increases while the sense of meaningfulness reduces the involvement in substitute activities. The variable allowing for anticipating the style associated with seeking contact with people is the sense of comprehensibility (*Beta* = 0.19),

explaining 7% of the variance of the dependent variable results. The impact of this variable on the dependent variable is positive, which means that with the increase of the sense of comprehensibility, the tendency to seek contact with people increases.

Discussion

The presented research was aimed at determining the predictors of stress coping styles and at showing the relations between styles of coping with stress, resilience and the sense of coherence was also aimed at and the differences were sought in the tendency to apply appropriate styles of coping in stressful situations, in resilience and sense of coherence in the case of both juveniles referred to probation centres, and adolescents (the comparison group).

Having analysing the data, it can be observed that juveniles are characterised by a higher tendency to use emotional and avoidant style and to seek contact with people than the youth from the comparison group. The general level of pressure in the group of juveniles is significantly lower than in the youth from the comparison group. The results obtained by juveniles from probation centres on the scale of the sense of coherence are similar to the results obtained by adolescents from the comparison group. However, they are definitely higher than the results achieved, e.g. by youth from correctional facilities (Kopański, Wojciechowska, Antos, Uracz, & Beczek, 2013). It can be stated that juveniles are characterised by a rather average (medium) intensity of the sense of coherence.

Resilience, treated as a personality trait, is associated with styles of coping with stress in the group of surveyed juveniles. In general, the higher its level, the higher the tendency to use the avoidant style and its forms: engaging in substitute activities and seeking contact with people. The strongest relation takes place in the case of the style focused on the task. The sense of coherence is also related to the task-oriented style, the emotional style and seeking contact with people. In general, the higher the level of coherence was, the tendency to use the task-based style and to seek contact with people increased, while the tendency to employ the emotional style decreased. With regard to the results of previous research (M. Cohen, Ben-Zur, & Rosenfeld, 2008; O. Cohen & Dekel, 2000; Leipold & Greve, 2009; Pallant & Lae, 2002; Skehill,

2001), we confirmed a relations between sense of coherence, resilience and styles coping with stress.

The research results show that sense of coherence and resilience factors play a predictive function for the style which is focused on task, emotions, avoidance and the strategy of engaging in substitute activities and seeking contact with people. Optimistic attitude and energy as well as perseverance and determination in action turned out to be predictors for the task-oriented style. It can be assumed that they support the tendency to use a task-oriented style in difficult situations and in a sense may enhance the positive functioning of the individual in spite of the experienced threats, adversities or traumatic experiences that are currently happening or have happened in the past (Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). Moreover, some studies have shown that resilience is crucial for the engagement of a task-focused strategy in difficult situations and the effective detachment from negative experiences (Sęk, Kaczmarek, Ziarko, Pietrzykowska, & Lewicka, 2012).

The sense of meaningfulness performs a predictive function for the emotional style, lowering its value, which suggests that the lower the sense of meaningfulness, the more preferred is the stress management style which is focused on the individual and their own emotional experiences (anger, guilt, tension) in a stressful situation. Such people may have a tendency to think and fantasise, which is aimed at reducing the emotional tension associated with the stressful situation (Płaczekiewicz & Tucholska, 2009). Young people with a low sense of meaningfulness undertake challenges and the effort to solve problems and manage them with a lot of resistance and stressful situations prove to be difficult for them. Instead of taking specific actions, the individual focuses on experiencing negative emotions, escapes into fantasy and into wishful thinking.

Personal competences and tolerance of negative affect performed a predictive role for the tendency to use the style focused on avoidance. It may seem intriguing why this factor has a predictive role for the avoidant style among juveniles. This may be related to the specificity of the examined group; for people with behavioural problems (punishable acts, demoralisation), the style focused on avoiding stressful situations which may be related to personal competences and tolerance of negative affect, may be typical. While analysing the role of individual coherence components as predictors of engaging in substitute activities, it is necessary first of all to indicate the importance of the sense of meaningfulness, which reduces the use of this style. It can be

assumed that if a person feels that their life makes sense, that it is worth undertaking effort and being involved, they will not engage in substitute activities (watching television, eating, making unnecessary purchases). Factor 4 – personal competences and tolerance of negative affect – is also essential for the sense of life satisfaction and it allows for predicting this style. Explaining the significance of this factor, it seems useful to refer (as in the case of the avoidant style) to the specificity of the examined group. The sense of comprehensibility performs a predictive function for the style related to seeking contact with people. It seems, therefore, that when a person notices the incoming information as structured, consistent and understandable, then this individual in a difficult situation seeks contact with people. Thanks to this, the person gains the opportunity to familiarise with their opinions, obtain information and support or look at the situation from different points of view (Antonovsky, 1993, 1996; Binnebesel, 2006).

It seems that people with a high level of resilience are capable of self-control when the situation requires this and are also able to significantly reduce it when the situation allows. Both ends of the self-control continuum describe functional patterns that in some situations can lead to effective coping with difficult situations (Kaczmarek, Sęk, & Ziarko, 2011; Sęk et al., 2012). The obtained research results to some extent confirm the thesis put forward by A. Antonovsky (1995) that a strongly developed sense of coherence motivates a person to act and be active. Some internal or external resources are activated – they allow for reaching an opinion on the stimuli coming from the environment, whether they should be assessed as positive or negative for the regulatory mechanism. If the challenge is dominant in the assessment of stressors, the individual mobilises their skills to deal with the problems effectively. Owing to this, the tension will not turn into long-lasting stress, which, as a consequence, will not negatively affect health, whereas success will result in the development and strengthening of resources (Antonovsky, 1995, 1996). Resilience and the sense of coherence are key factors in the protection and promotion of mental health. These are variables that trigger the choice of appropriate management styles, which consequently can help to cope with various ups and downs in life as well as with difficult and stressful situations.

In the research, self-descriptive measurement tools were applied, which is associated with the possible occurrence of changing social approval, i.e. the willingness of the respondents to present themselves in a better light. In addition, the research was of cross-sectional nature. Therefore, it cannot serve

as the unequivocal confirmation of any cause and effect relations. Despite the limitations, the obtained research results bring new information into the area of the determinants of stress management styles in the group of juveniles. They also confirm the importance of resilience and the sense of coherence as important resources affecting human behaviour. These results may also have practical significance, primarily in the process of resocialisation education. They point to the need for developing and shaping resources, such as the sense of coherence and resilience. Their development can be supported, among other things, by gaining new experiences and building the individual's ability to adapt to changes in a healthy way which leads to effective coping with difficulties. Resilience and the sense of coherence can be also developed by inducing high motivation to undertake new actions or to change attitudes (including abandoning anti-social behaviour, shaping cognitive structures, building the awareness of the own emotions and the ability to understand the emotions of others). This can take place thanks to shaping the sense of self-esteem and effectiveness, independence, flexibility, creativity and spirituality (Ogińska-Bulik, 2014; Zarrett & Lerner, 2008).

Conclusions for probation officers and educators

Both health processes and diseases are determined on the one hand by resources, and on the other by human immunodeficiencies. As MEP Seligman points out (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Seligman, 2005), educating of youth is not just about correcting their shortcomings. Therefore positive psychology emphasises above all finding and strengthening their resources in our case, the resilience and a sense of coherence that allow us for better coping with stress, which consequently leads to positive psychosocial functioning. It is important to diagnose personal resources – health potentials that can be developed and multiplied in the course of preventive and educational interventions, so that we can be sure that youth will not lack the right behaviour patterns that increase health and help fight stress effectively. Having resources does not imply their activation in contact with a critical situation, but if they are activated, they become an important variable mediating between stress events and coping with them (Şek, 1991).

The discovery and activation of the natural potentialities of resistance and health-preservation resources can be an element which favours the selection of

appropriate coping strategies in stressful situations. In addition to the material benefits of the activities undertaken at that point, some “added value” will be obtained in the form of well-being, growing intrinsic motivation, self-esteem that serves as encouragement, trust in oneself and one’s own abilities (Wójcik, Gut, & Piegowska, 2008). The study of resilience and sense of coherence turns out to be useful for mental prevention of health and resocialisation, especially when the effects of stress and coping with difficulties and problems are focused on. For example, illness, social maladjustment or even crime can be viewed as the results of the depletion of resistance resources (Poprawa, 2001). Therefore, it is important to refer the obtained results to actions which can be taken in the context of building resources that affect the positive functioning of the individual. Having analysed the obtained research results, resilience and the sense of coherence can be included into such resources. These are factors that when used “well” allow the individual to launch strategies related to coping with a stressful situation in a constructive manner and to reduce the possibility of using undesirable strategies. Enforcing (by probation officers) the sense of coherence among young people involves better understanding of the surrounding world and the stimuli which come from it, understanding internal signals and increasing the sense of manageability and agency, enhancing the ability to use the own and the environmental resources as well as working on the sense of meaningfulness, i.e. the motivational aspect of functioning (Bakula, 2001; Placzekiewicz & Tucholska, 2009). While working on the increasing sense of coherence, simultaneous work on the current daily problems should be done: looking at the problems will make them more understandable and, when the understanding of a particular situation increases, the own abilities and the availability of environmental resources can be estimated. It is important for young people to be able to set a goal and check whether they want to achieve this goal and whether it is worth achieving (Bakula, 2001). Another area that should be worked on to achieve optimal social functioning is resilience. People treated as mentally resilient have the impression that many things that happen in their life depend on them and that they can change the course of events through their actions. Such thinking encourages activity because it gives activity a meaning. In building resilience, this helps to accept oneself and the world and to have the awareness of one’s own personal competences. Supporting these components through psychoeducational activities (in probation centres) enables better understanding of the own self and, consequently, using stress management strategies aimed

at finding a positive solution to a particular situation (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Tugade, Fredrickson, & Feldman Barrett, 2004).

Ethics approval and consent to participate

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. We carried out the research in direct contact with respondents. Participants received a paper-based research sheets directly from the researcher, who explained the purpose of the study, informed them about the voluntary participation and that each of the subjects could withdraw from the study at any time. The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of Białystok approved the research project. We have obtained written informed consent for participation in research from the parents/legal guardians of all non-adult participants. Participants were informed one month in advance about the data collection. Reassurances were made that participants only should participate at their free will and could decline at any time.

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